

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name CLIFTON

other names/site number VDHR # 249-5029

2. Location

street & number 49 Clifton Avenue not for publication N/A

city or town N/A vicinity Kilmarnock

state Virginia code VA county Northumberland code 133 zip code 22482

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the
procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register
☐ removed from the National
Register

☐ other (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Clifton
Name of Property

Northumberland County, Virginia
City and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Non-contributing

<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: camp (hunting lodge)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL: Georgian

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD: weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1785

Significant Dates

1785

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record# _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository :

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Clifton
Name of Property

Northumberland County, Virginia
City and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 109.3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	18	378970	4174980	3	18	379750	4174200
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	18	379840	4174880	4	18	378975	4174575

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Harding Sadler, Bradley M. McDonald, and Kathryn E. Colwell

organization Sadler & Whitehead Architects, PLC date 31 December 2003

street & number 800 West 33rd Street telephone 804-231-5299

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23225-3533

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Eugene S. and Gayle L. Hudnall

street & number 221 Joseph Ball Lane telephone 804-435-1118

city or town Kilmarnock state Virginia zip code 22482

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 200137127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (10240018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Clifton
Northumberland County, Virginia
VDHR file # 249-5029**

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Summary Description:

Clifton is an eighteenth century house sited on the brow of a hill in Northumberland County, Virginia on a 109.3 acre tract. The house is a two-story weatherboarded residence with brick nogging that was probably built in 1785 by Landon Carter II. The construction date was established through analysis of historic documents and dendrochronology directed by Camille Wells.

The main historic block has a central chimney and an end gable roof. In the early 1800s, two one-story additions with end chimneys were appended to the east and west ends. One of these additions was removed in the 1860s, and later a side porch constructed. The final addition, now an enclosed kitchen at the northeast corner, was built during the twentieth century. The unusual symmetrical floor plan features a lateral entry hall with paired stairs, and a central chimney that serves fireplaces in the two formal rooms on the first floor and pivots to serve the four second-floor bed chambers.¹ The integrity of the plan is uncompromised by the later additions.

The site includes one contributing building –the house– and three non-contributing buildings located north of the residence. The non-contributing resources are small, one-story outbuildings that were constructed during the twentieth century. Beyond the building complex, the site is characterized by open farmland interspersed with woods.

Detailed Description:

Exterior

This two-story Georgian style house is clad with white-washed weatherboards. Though the main block of the house is symmetrical, the openings of the first and second floors are not aligned. This curious composition of window and door openings reflects the ingenious floor plan within. The main block's first floor on both north and south (entry) elevations has three bays. Originally front and rear entries were centered on the ground floor; the rear entry was converted to a window some time in the 20th century. The second story is defined by the four bays resulting from the two windows that light each of the four upper bed chambers.

The building's exterior is finished in plain, circular-sawn weatherboards and the roofing is composition shingles. The elaborate double-dentil cornice appears to be original.² Though all of the windows are four-over-four, wood, double-hung sash with louvered shutters, those on the first floor are taller than those on the second floor. Among the original building's quiet refinements is the Flemish bond foundation whose mortar joints evidence historic pencilling.

After the initial phase of construction in 1785, Clifton was not enlarged or significantly altered until after 1827 when Anne Carter Tomlin and her husband William added east and west wings to the house and rebuilt the central chimney. Although the one-story, gable-roofed east wing remains and is used as the master bedroom, the west wing was removed soon after the Civil War. Oral history contends that owner John Palmer gave the wing to Tom Ben Hurst, a close friend and comrade-in-arms whose house had burned during the conflict. A one-story, hip-roofed, screened side porch was added to the west side of the house in the early-twentieth century.³ The one-story, single-bay front porch is a compatible addition constructed by the present owner's father, who acquired the property from family members ca. 1950. The same gentleman added the one-story wing at the northeast corner that is presently used as the kitchen.

Interior

Upon entering the house a visitor stands in the center of a lateral passage with symmetrically disposed window and door openings and virtually identical, open stairs at each end. The presence of the two sets of stairs leading to separate second-

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floor chambers is consistent with the long-held oral tradition that the house was used by its earliest owners as a hunting lodge. The stairs are further distinguished by the ornamental brackets at each tread. From the lateral entry hall one can enter the two formal spaces, the parlor and the dining room, each of which is heated by a large fireplace. Dell Upton and Camille Wells observe that the fireplace in the parlor was rebuilt in the twentieth century. Owner Eugene Hudnall notes that plaster was removed from the six chimney breasts by his father in the 1950s. These changes do not affect the essential character of the house, whose historic interior partitions date from original construction.

In a unique response to functional requirements, the house designer/builder created a plan that cleverly shifts from the first story's single-pile, lateral passage plan to the second story's double-pile plan with end passages. On the first floor, the fronts of the two chimney breasts parallel the side walls. On the second floor, the central chimney is pivoted to feed four fireplaces opening from a diagonal face at the inside corner of each chamber. This plan gave warmth and private entry to two independent second floor suites that might have been used by lodgers or visitors. The door linking the two south chambers is not original.

Historians Upton and Wells identify a number of original interior features. These include the two stairs, the molded chair rail in the entry hall and in the second floor passages, the dentil moldings in the parlor and dining room, and a number of doors and casings on the second floor. Other doors and door casings appear to date from the Federal and Greek Revival periods.

Setting

The house is located within a 109.3 acre tract and is sited on the brow of a hill facing south. Originally the house was accessible by water from Indian Creek, which now delineates the property's southern border, as well as the border between Northumberland and Lancaster Counties.⁴

In addition to the main house, the site includes three non-contributing resources. These non-contributing resources are small, one-story outbuildings located north of the main house. These include a guest cottage, garage, and garden shed. All of the non-contributing resources were constructed during the twentieth century. In addition, a twentieth century drive circles in front of the main entry and a small rectangular garden enhances the rear yard. Beyond the building complex, the site is characterized by open farmland interspersed with woods.

Summary

The house at Clifton is a frame structure with an historic, central block enclosing a formal, symmetrical house plan whose integrity is uncompromised by the later additions of a Federal wing, a twentieth century kitchen and twentieth century porches. The original plan combines unusual features like the pivoted central chimney and a first floor lateral passage to create a playful and fascinating disposition of interior space. The deliberate but unexpected patterning of openings on the front and rear elevations hints at the architectural surprises that await Clifton's visitors. Early investigations by Dell Upton followed by Camille Wells' ongoing studies provide a wealth of insight and documentation, encouraging continued studies of this fascinating house.

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Statement of Significance


Clifton was constructed in 1785 by Landon Carter II on property that was originally part of Robert “King” Carter’s vast Virginia holdings.⁵ After building the house, Landon and Catherine Tayloe Carter lived at Clifton for about a decade before moving to the Carter ancestral home, Sabine Hall, in Richmond County. Anne Catherine Carter Tomlin and her husband lived at Clifton from 1827-1842. During several periods in its history Clifton has been used as a “get-away” or hunting lodge. The unusual four-square, central chimney floor plan, featuring matching stairways that each lead to a pair of second floor bedrooms, was well suited to this use. Clifton remained in the Carter family until 1842 when it was sold to James Armistead Palmer. The property is still owned by descendants of the Palmer family. The main block and west wing retain a high degree of integrity.

The Clifton property meets *National Register Criteria C* because of its unusual late-eighteenth century floor plan. It is a rare example of a four-square plan with central chimney, combined with a front passage and paired stairs.

Historical Background

Clifton’s Northumberland County location was originally part of the vast Virginia holdings of Robert “King” Carter. The property was first farmed by Robert Carter’s son Landon Carter (1710-1778) during the mid-eighteenth century. In order to distinguish between his Northumberland agricultural operations, Landon Carter referred to this quarter as “Bloughpoint.”⁶ The property was cultivated in corn, wheat, and tobacco by approximately forty slaves with two overseers and a site manager, John Eustace Beale. Carter’s diary refers to construction of a new dwelling for Beale but dendrochronology indicates that this house was constructed in 1785, after Landon Carter’s death.

Following Landon Carter’s 1778 death the property descended first to his son Robert Wormeley Carter (1733-1797), who lived at Sabine Hall, and then to Robert’s son Landon Carter II (1757-1820). Landon Carter II was the first Carter family member to live at the “Bloughpoint” (now Clifton) site.

Landon Carter II served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. In 1780, in the midst of the war, he married Catherine Tayloe. By 1782, his father Robert Carter had deeded to him 1100 acres of Northumberland County property. Clifton was constructed shortly thereafter as the primary residence of Landon and Catherine Carter. In 1797, following Robert Carter’s death, the couple moved  Sabine Hall.⁷ Afterward, Clifton was probably used as a hunting lodge, while the land continued to be used for agriculture.⁸ In a letter to Clifton’s current owners, historian Camille Wells suggests that Clifton’s unusual floor plan was selected by the Carters because they assumed that, following their move to Sabine Hall, Clifton would serve a different purpose than their primary residence.⁹

Anne Catherine Carter inherited Clifton in 1820, following the death of Landon Carter II, and was living in the house by 1827. Anne and her husband Williamson B. Tomlin made several changes to the house. One-story, single-room wings were built at the east and west ends. A cellar, which also served as a kitchen, was constructed below the east wing, and the central chimney was rebuilt.

Following Anne Carter Tomlin’s death in 1842 the house was sold to Colonel James Armistead Palmer. Oral history suggests that Palmer removed the west wing and gave it to a close friend whose house had burned during the Civil War¹⁰. Clifton has remained in the Palmer family since the 1840s. The present owners Eugene and Gayle Hudnall have recently completed a careful restoration of the house, in consultation with architectural historian Camille Wells.

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Bibliography

Chilton, Cyrus H.

1957 Unpublished HABS survey file. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA.

Carter Family Papers

Various Landon Carter Inventory, 1778 and Carter Family Papers 1659-1797. Alderman Library Special Collections, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

Hudnall, Eugene S.

1986 Interview with Camille Wells, June 13, 1986.

Northumberland County

1843 Deed Book 33, Pages 185-186. On file at the Clerk of Courts Office, Heathsville, VA.

Strong, Louise Palmer

n.d. *Clifton*. On file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA.

Upton, Dell

1976a Unpublished letter to B.B. Edmonds, Mayor of Kilmarnock, VA.

1976b Unpublished field notes.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

n.d. Architectural File Number 249-5029.

Wells, Camille

2002 Unpublished field notes.

2001 Letter to Bud Hudnall, July 3.

n.d. *Clifton: Northumberland County, Fleet's Bay 7.5*. On file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of Clifton includes the properties described in Northumberland County deed book 477-241 as Clifton: 51-(1)--72-102.4580 AC NW; Upper Clifton Parcel E: 51-(1)--72-H 3.3060 AC NW; and Upper Clifton Parcel F: 51-(1)--72-I 3.5370 AC NW. The boundary is generally depicted by the bold line on the accompanying survey map. The boundary can be described as encompassing the entire Clifton property as it exists at the time of this writing.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the historic property known as Clifton include the remaining historic structure and the surrounding land associated with the Clifton plantation and owned by Eugene S. and Gayle L. Hudnall.

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Photographic Index

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Property: Clifton
Location: Northumberland County, Virginia
Photographer: Kathryn E. Colwell
Date: May 5, 2002
VDHR File #: 249-5029
VDHR Neg. #: 21142

All negatives are stored at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Photo: 1 of 12
Subject: Site and South Façade
Frame no.: 24A

Photo: 2 of 12
Subject: Main Entrance Portico, South Façade
Frame no.: 19A

Photo: 3 of 12
Subject: East Elevation
Frame no.: 22A

Photo: 4 of 12
Subject: North, Rear Elevation
Frame no.: 21A

Photo: 5 of 12
Subject: Cornice Detail
Frame no.: 4A

Photo: 6 of 12
Subject: East Wing Addition Bedroom, First Floor, view to the southwest
Frame no.: 15A

Photo: 7 of 12
Subject: Dining Room Fireplace, First Floor, view to west
Frame no.: 8A

Photo: 8 of 12
Subject: Bedroom, Second Floor, view to west
Frame no.: 2A

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Photo: 9 of 12
Subject: Entry Hall, view to west from second floor landing
Frame no.: 9A

Photo: 10 of 12
Subject: Entry Hall, view to east
Frame no.: 18A

Photo: 11 of 12
Subject: Parlor and Fireplace, First Floor, view to southeast
Frame no.: 7A

Photo: 12 of 12
Subject: East Hall, Second Floor, view to north
Frame no.: 14A

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Endnotes

¹ Dell Upton, unpublished letter to B.B. Edmonds, Mayor, Kilmarnock, VA, 17 May 1976.

² Detailed discussion of original and later building elements are found in the observations of two architectural historians: Dell Upton, as recorded in his unpublished field notes (4/27/76) and in a letter (5/17/76) from Mr. Upton to Mr. B.B. Edmonds, Jr., Mayor of Kilmarnock, VA, and Camille Wells, as recorded in her unpublished field notes (6/13/86) and in a letter (7/3/01) from Ms. Wells to Clifton's current owners Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Hudnall.

³ Cyrus H. Chilton, unpublished HABS file (11/14/57). Mr. Chilton's survey of Clifton, a copy of which can be found in the Department of Historic Resources' archives, includes photographs taken prior to construction of the present front porch and kitchen wing.

⁴ Camille Wells, unpublished field notes provided by Eugene and Gayle Hudnall.

⁵ Camille Wells to Bud Hudnall, 3 July 2001. Construction dated by dendrochronological testing in 2001. Lab results indicate framing members in cellar and attic were cut in 1785.

⁶ Camille Wells, "Clifton: Northumberland County, Fleet's Bay 7.5," (photocopy), pg. 2. Landon Carter owned 1450 acres in Northumberland County. These unpublished, undated notes were probably written between 1986 and 2001.

⁷ Camille Wells to Bud Hudnall, 3 July 2001.

⁸ Louise Palmer Strong, "Clifton," (photocopy), undated. Oral family history has held that Clifton was constructed as a hunting lodge by Landon Carter I. Recent research dates the house to 1785, after Landon Carter's death (1710-1778) but coinciding with Landon Carter II's ownership of the Northumberland County property.

⁹ Camille Wells to Hudnall, 3 July 2001. An 1820 inventory at the time of Landon Carter's death indicates that items at Clifton were primarily older furnishings and of limited number such as 5 wine glasses and 3 dozen pewter plates.

¹⁰ Eugene S. Hudnall, interview by Camille Walls, 13 June 1986.